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Final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

Letter dated 4 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Missions of Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa to the United Nations, representing the initiators of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), in cooperation with the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands, and supported by the International Peace Academy (IPA), organized a policy forum on NEPAD in New York on 16 July 2002.

The objective of this meeting was to inform the United Nations community about NEPAD in order to facilitate preparation of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to consider how to support NEPAD, which is scheduled for 16 September 2002.

I have the honour to transmit herewith the summary and the main recommendations of this policy forum, as drafted by the International Peace Academy (see annex).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly for the high-level plenary meeting.

A full report of the policy forum will be published shortly by the International Peace Academy.

(*Signed*) Dirk Jan **van den Berg**
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom
of the Netherlands to the United Nations

* A/57/150.

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Annex

The New Partnership for Africa's Development: African initiative, new partnership?

Policy forum on the New Partnership for Africa's Development

International Peace Academy
in cooperation with the Permanent Missions of Algeria, Egypt, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa to the United Nations

New York, 16 July 2002

Purpose of the policy forum on the New Partnership for Africa's Development

As a preparation for the United Nations General Assembly high-level plenary meeting on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), scheduled for 16 September 2002, the Permanent Missions of Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa to the United Nations, in partnership with the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations and the International Peace Academy (IPA), hosted a meeting on NEPAD in New York on 16 July 2002. The purpose of the meeting was to inform and focus the attention of the broader United Nations community on NEPAD in order to facilitate a concrete outcome of the September 2002 General Assembly meeting. The meeting was attended by 150 participants, among which were many Permanent Representatives to the United Nations and representatives from the United Nations Secretariat and United Nations organizations, as well as several representatives from the private, non-governmental and academic sector.

The NEPAD policy forum focused on three main themes, namely NEPAD's potential for growth, the need for regional relationships and obstacles to the success and implementation of NEPAD. Led by Professor Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Ambassador Said Djinnit, Interim Commissioner of the African Union, the first theme addressed NEPAD's relationship with the United Nations and the African Union. Next, Ambassador Dirk Jan van den Berg, the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations, facilitated presentations by NEPAD focal point representatives on democracy, governance, peace and security; economic and corporate governance; infrastructure and information technology; health and education; and agriculture and market access. The NEPAD focal point representatives appear in the enclosure. Finally, Ambassador Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, former Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), led discussions on perspectives from NEPAD's implementing partners: the Group of 8 (G8),[1] UNDP, the World Bank and civil society on opportunities and obstacles facing NEPAD. The representatives of these groups appear in the enclosure. Professor Adebayo Adedeji, Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Director of the African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies in Nigeria, delivered the

[1] The G8 includes: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

keynote address, which provided a retrospective on and lessons from past programmes of development and regional integration.

The plan of action of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

The NEPAD plan of action focuses on democracy, governance and peace and security; economic and corporate governance; infrastructure and information technology; human resource development (notably, health and education); and agriculture and market access. By placing emphasis on these five priorities, NEPAD leaders aim to spur Africa's development after decades of extremely disappointing progress due to both external factors (such as the legacies of the colonial period and the Cold War) and domestic factors (lack of sound governance, economic policies and management; destructive conflicts).

Overall, participants at the policy forum welcomed the NEPAD initiative. Several participants emphasized that, compared to previous initiatives, NEPAD stands a better chance of implementation, since, with the end of the Cold War, a new generation of African leaders has emerged who are willing to embrace sounder approaches to governance and economic policy. At the same time, a number of critical issues were raised at the policy forum. The participants emphasized that the critical components for NEPAD's success lie in strong domestic, regional and international partnerships and the fulfilment of promises. Specifically, the African Peer Review Mechanism, strong alliances with civil society and the private sector, integration with the African Union, and a new relationship with the international community's donors and the G8 all hold the keys for Africa's development. The discussion on each of these themes is summarized below.

The African Peer Review Mechanism of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

NEPAD's African Peer Review Mechanism, which will serve as a means through which African leaders can monitor compliance with NEPAD's principles of political and economic governance, is still evolving. Some doubts were raised about the ability and willingness of African leaders to implement NEPAD's voluntary African Peer Review Mechanism[2] effectively in order to monitor the economic and political performance of their peers. Concerns were raised that African leaders may be unwilling to impose politically divisive sanctions on their fellow heads of State, thus weakening the credibility of the Mechanism. Fears were also expressed that external actors could attempt to use the Mechanism to sanction leaders selectively or could become a means through which donors could impose collective penalties on Africa in cases where leaders who are rejected by external actors are not sanctioned by their African peers.

[2] The voluntary nature of the African Peer Review Mechanism is noted in *The New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD), *The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)*, paras. 1 and 5 (available on http://www.nepad.org/Doc006.pdf, 22 July 2002).

Relationship of the New Partnership for Africa's Development with civil society and the private sector

Several participants at the New York meeting observed that African civil society organizations were not involved in the planning and presentation processes of NEPAD. They further noted that there was a dearth of information about NEPAD's goals and activities outside of its secretariat and among key implementing Governments. Several participants emphasized the importance of better engagement between NEPAD leaders and civil society groups. However, participants noted that civil society groups also have a responsibility to engage both NEPAD and the African Union, and must find innovative ways of creating partnerships among themselves.

In contrast, it was noted that Africa's private sector has, thus far, responded favourably to NEPAD, as was evident by their participation at the conference on financing NEPAD, held in Dakar from 15 to 17 April 2002, and at the World Economic Forum's Southern Africa Summit, held from 5 to 7 June 2002, in Durban, South Africa.

The relationship between the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the African Union

NEPAD and the African Union have often been viewed as separate initiatives. To ameliorate this situation, several participants suggested that leaders and officials of NEPAD and the African Union must articulate both their relationship to each other and the mechanisms through which NEPAD can function effectively as a development programme within the African Union.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development and the international community

NEPAD distinguishes itself from past development plans through its explicit emphasis on African ownership of ideas and its commitment to upholding the norms of democratic governance and market policies, in parallel with a partnership with the G8 and other bilateral and multilateral donors, inter alia, the World Bank and UNDP.

The G8

Canada, as current chair of the G8, informed the forum that the G8 summit in Kananaskis, Canada, in July 2002, pledged development assistance while insisting on the simultaneous fulfilment of promises of economic and democratic reform. Specifically, the G8 pledged that at least half of the amount earmarked at the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in March 2002, in Monterrey, Mexico, that is, $12 billion by 2006, could be directed to African States that upheld the NEPAD principles.[3] At the same time, the G8 has stressed that its Africa Action Plan is not a "Marshall Plan", but rather, a political document whose fulfilment depends on the contribution that the African Peer Review Mechanism can make to implement commitments of economic and political reform.

[3] *G8 Africa Action Plan*, para. 9, Government of Canada (available from: http://www.g8.gc.ca/kan_docs/afraction-e.asp, 16 July 2002).

The United Nations Development Programme

UNDP indicated that it is helping to facilitate NEPAD's relationship with civil society and to encourage investment by non-G8 donor countries. Recently, UNDP sponsored the Conference of African Parliamentarians, held in Accra, Ghana, in April 2002, organized by the Africa Leadership Forum on Regional Strategic Initiatives in Africa. In October, UNDP will sponsor a Forum of African parliamentarians on NEPAD, in Cotonou, Benin. To broaden the participation of the private sector, UNDP will be sponsoring a forum on financing African development in New York, in September 2002.

The World Bank

The World Bank's representative drew attention to the World Bank's 2000 publication, *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?*, which had highlighted the fact that structural adjustment programmes did not generally yield the expected development. As a result, the World Bank has begun to engage in Africa in a more consultative, integrative and regional fashion. The increasingly participatory approach is reflected in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), which are prepared by Governments in partnership with civil society and development entities and currently support $3.5 billion of development projects in Africa annually. The Bank has increasingly endorsed a more regional approach to development, a recognition that the small size of several African States render country-based programmes inefficient, especially in the area of infrastructure development, trade facilities and HIV/AIDS programmes. Indeed, NEPAD's emphasis on regional development will greatly facilitate the work by the World Bank.

Policy recommendations

The participants at the policy forum provided recommendations that would support NEPAD in addressing the issues raised regarding adequate information, inclusion of regional entities, obstacles to an effective peer review and the credibility of commitments on behalf of the G8 and the African States.

More information about the New Partnership for Africa's Development

While NEPAD was generally welcomed as an important and bold initiative, it was also recognized that many Governments, regional organizations, and civil society actors within and outside Africa as yet do not have sufficient information about it. This could weaken opportunities for building a constituency for the plan. On a positive note, with Africa's private sector publicly supporting NEPAD's economic objectives, the plan holds a reasonable chance of attracting some of the domestic and external capital urgently needed to spur economic growth in Africa. But, NEPAD's leaders and secretariat officials also need to consult non-governmental actors such as NGOs, labour movements, and churches.

Securing the integration of the New Partnership for Africa's Development into the African Union?

While it is clear to many African leaders that NEPAD is a programme of the African Union, the establishment of the NEPAD secretariat in Midrand, South Africa, conveys to some the impression of a dual process — African leaders must urgently correct this perception. Indeed, through the African Union, NEPAD can reach more organizations and thereby increase its constituency. Similarly, through the success of NEPAD, the African Union can begin to build a track record of development and can fulfil its promise. Most importantly, the African Union must secure the implementation of its own goals of economic integration and political unity and ensure that the capacities of its institutions such as the Peace and Security Council, the Pan-African Parliament and the Economic and Social Council are strengthened to achieve these objectives.

Ensuring the effectiveness of the African Peer Review Mechanism

Some African leaders have committed themselves to monitoring each other's performance through the establishment of the voluntary African Peer Review Mechanism. Significantly, only States that subscribe to the peer review will be subject to its rulings.[4] The rules and oversight institutions of NEPAD's mechanism are still evolving. Under the present proposal, the African Peer Review Mechanism will reward States that uphold the norms of free markets and democratic policies. Yet, African States have not resolved whether and how they should impose sanctions on resisting States. Importantly, the G8 has clearly stated that its support for the NEPAD plan will depend on the ability of African leaders to keep their commitments to economic and political reforms. African leaders, for their part, have stressed that only the speedy provision of tangible benefits promised by the G8 and other donors can ensure the fulfilment of NEPAD's goals.

The African Peer Review Mechanism has the potential to become the most important component in ensuring the success of NEPAD. In order to ensure the mechanism's effectiveness, African leaders should establish objective criteria by which the international community can judge whether NEPAD's "good governance" commitments are being met.

Relationship of the New Partnership for Africa's Development with the G8 and the wider international community

The G8 has stressed that its support for NEPAD is contingent on the adherence of African leaders to NEPAD's principles. African leaders are urged to commit to democratic and economic reforms in the face of constraints such as weak institutions and the destructive effects of HIV/AIDS, civil conflicts and a crippling debt burden. However, many Africans, both leaders and citizens, remain sceptical about the willingness of the G8 to fulfil its commitment to NEPAD, given competing demands on resources. Given the importance for all stakeholders to understand clearly the

[4] NEPAD, *The African Peer Review Mechanism*, paras. 1 and 6.

substance of the evolving partnership between Africa and its donors, the G8 should outline more concretely the details of its commitment to NEPAD.

Several participants signalled that Africa must reverse its continuing dependence on the industrial nations for aid and investment. Instead, resources for development must come increasingly from domestic sources. Specifically, these participants noted that Africa could spur development through reducing financial waste and capital flight, ensuring better management of public assets, utilizing resources more efficiently and promoting self-reliance and domestic savings. In this regard, it was suggested that the key sectors of education, health and development of infrastructure should be accorded high priority.

Enclosure

New Partnership for Africa's Development representatives and panel presentations

Mr. Smunda Mokoena, Deputy Director-General, NEPAD Steering Committee, South Africa, "Democracy, Governance, Peace and Security"

Ambassador Isaac Aluko-Olokun, NEPAD Focal Point, Nigeria, "Economic and Corporate Governance"

Mr. Abdou Aziz Sow, NEPAD Focal Point, Senegal, "Infrastructure and Information Technology"

Ambassador M'hamed Achache, NEPAD Focal Point, Algeria, "Health and Education"

Ambassador Ibrahim Ali Hassan, NEPAD Focal Point, Egypt, "Agriculture and Market Access"

Implementing partners and presentations

Ambassador Paul Heinbecker, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, "NEPAD: a G8 Perspective"

Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, Country Director, Regional Programme for Africa, UNDP, "NEPAD: a UNDP Perspective"

Mr. Alan Gelb, Senior Economist for Africa, World Bank, "NEPAD: a World Bank Perspective"

Dr. Chris Landsberg, Co-director, Centre for Africa's International Relations, University of the Witswatersrand, South Africa, "NEPAD: a Civil Society Perspective"